

ASIFA EAST

ANIMATOR

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ANIMATED ARTS

Student / First Films / Films

**A screening of first films by
ASIFA-East Filmmakers and
recently completed student films.**

Thursday, June 18, 6:00 P.M.

School of Visual Arts

209 East 23rd Street

Amphitheater (Room 311)

JUNE 1992

DAVID EHRLICH AND MARTY MCNAMARA TO PRESENT PAPERS ON ASIAN ANIMATION

Two panels at the Asian Cinema Studies Society Conference will be devoted exclusively to Asian Animation. Held at NYU's Vanderbilt Hall, 40 Washington Square South, on Friday, June 12th, the first panel, 2:15-4:15 pm, will feature the following papers: "Comic Art and Film in Southeast Asia" by John A. Lent; "Kawamoto Kihachiro: Fusion of Two Puppet Traditions", by MARTY MCNAMARA of ASIFA-San Francisco; "The Aesthetic Parameters of Chinese Animation", by Wang Hanchuan. The second panel, 4:30-6:30 pm, will feature: "Havoc in Heaven": A Study in Genres", by Mary Ann Farquhar and "A Da: China's Animated Open Door to the World", by DAVID EHRLICH of ASIFA-East.

ASIFA-EAST

**The International Animated
Film Society**

c/o Linda Simensky
470 West 24th Street, #15A
New York, N.Y. 10011

**A PROGRAM OF
THE CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOUNDATION**

ASIFA EAST

**The International
Animated Film Society
(New York Chapter)**

A program of the Cultural Council Foundation

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David Ehrlich, ASIFA Intl. Board,
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Student / First Films

Spring in New York brings with it the end of the semester. The end of the semester for animation students means the dreaded "finishing of the film."

To honor these students who have worked so diligently all year, the last ASIFA show before summer hiatus will present a number of recently-completed student films.

How can ASIFA-EAST further encourage these students, we thought. Why not inspire them by showing the first films or student films of some of ASIFA-EAST's most well-known animators?

Obtaining these first films has been a tough job. Some animators have lost them, some didn't do a first film and skipped right to their second, and some are just too embarrassed.

All in all, this should make for a very entertaining show.

Jerilyn Mettlin and Linda Simensky will present student films from NYU and SVA. ASIFA-EAST luminaries who are graciously allowing us to screen their earliest works include George Griffin, Candy Kugel, Bill Plympton, David Ehrlich, Janet Benn, Michael Sporn, John R. Dilworth and others.

THE CLASSIC ASIFA-EAST TEE SHIRT

Official ASIFA-East Tee shirts are available. We intend to offer a different one each year. The current design which features an appropriate red logo on solid black, is by Howard Beckerman. Collect them all. You can obtain this handsome symbol of our group at a meeting or by contacting the address on this bulletin. The price

is \$15.00 each and the money is a donation to ASIFA-East. The shirt makes a really nice gift.



INDEPENDENT BULLETIN

By Ray Kosarin

In the May issue of ANYMATOR, Independent Bulletin spoke with Amy Kravitz about her film "Literacy," produced for MTV's "World Problems, World Solutions" competition. This month we look at two other winning entries by Boston animator Lauren MacMullen and by Simi Nallaseth and Mike de Seve in New York.

"I've always loved that Disney 'Silly Symphonies' style of animation," says Lauren MacMullen, "[and] Ub Iwerks. You can tell when you watch that he kind of made up a lot as he was animating. There's a really spontaneous quality that seems more alive."

MacMullen adopted a 1930's cartoon style for her film "Feet," which combines cel animation with a miniature three-dimensional set. Composer Jean-Marc Stuppard wrote period Dixieland music.

"Feet" begins with a frantic scene of a car assembly line, spitting out car after car. Next, the film shows us a bumper-to-bumper traffic jam. A title card commands, "Get out of your car!" in the final shot we see the 1930's characters on a highway overpass happily climbing out of their cars.

MacMullen's design enforces her message. Yellow sepia tones both suggest old movies and bathe her cartoon universe in a smog-like murk. Only after the characters leave their cars does the smog clear away, revealing a full range of color.

For much of the film, MacMullen chose not to opaque her characters but to leave them transparent, to emphasize the pervasiveness of the smog. For the 3-D set, MacMullen and cinematographer Sean Mathiesen heightened the smog effect with lighting gels.

Combining the cels and the set was a challenge. Because MTV needed a film version for theatrical release, MacMullen could not composite on tape, and she had no time to create film opticals. Mathiesen shot

both the set and the cels in a single pass.

"It was strangely rigged," says MacMullen. "Little weights, punched corners, rubber bands, and slits in the rods that we tucked the cels in. [This technique] is probably not commercially feasible, but it was a lot of fun to do."

World unity is the theme of "House of Cards," the award winning entry by Simi Nallaseth and Mike de Seve.

"House of Cards" uses 3-D computer animation to depict a surrealistic landscape, with a pyramid-shaped house of cards. Dust blows through the scene, the trees sway, and the cards shake. The camera moves in for a closeup, revealing the picturecard hands of the kings and queens gripping each other for support.

Simi Nallaseth conceived of the film. "House of Cards" was one of several storyboards developed by Nallaseth, de Seve, and animator Brian Mulroney.

"The film was strange," says de Seve, "because it didn't wind up looking like any of our work. It's not like any of us—it's more serene than the stuff Brian or I would do. The work Simi has done has been sort of zany, though she's starting to get more lyrical."

At first, Nallaseth and de Seve envisioned stop motion techniques. With only two months, however, to complete the film, they opted to create the same look on computer.

"It was really a dumb idea," says de Seve. "It was such a bitch to make. We couldn't stand what the computer was giving us; it looked so synthetic."

Says Nallaseth, "On the computer, everything looks so clean and there are no environmental influences as opposed to, say, cels which become dirty, or 3-D models which get bumpy or worn out. In the computer that doesn't happen because there's no environment. So you have to make an environment which is really difficult to do. You have to

continued on Page 9

FILM FESTIVALS

Part Nine by David Ehrlich

This is the final festivals column for the year. As I shall list a number of festivals with deadlines through the next newsletter in September, some of the information, such as exact dates and entry fees, is necessarily approximate.

1) DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (October 8-15)

This feature film festival has been growing rapidly the last few years, and it usually boasts the premieres of a number of American independent productions. It traditionally pairs 5-7 animated shorts with features and the Director, Ron Henderson, is appreciative of American animation. Send film or video copies between June 1st and August 15th. No fee. DIFF, 999 18th Street, Suite 247, Denver, CO 80202. Tel: (303) 298-8223.

2) HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Early December)

This feature film festival, run by the people at the East-West Center in Honolulu, specializes in feature and short films that encourage understanding and friendship between the peoples of North America and Asia and the Pacific rim. Most of the films are by Asians or by Americans about Asians, but there are exceptions. Bill Plympton's "25 WAYS TO QUIT SMOKING", which screened here last year, has nothing to do with Asia. It's just a good film. Films selected for the festival then tour theaters throughout the islands, with no admission charged. The entire event is impeccably run by Director, Jeanette Paulson. Deadline is early June, but they will screen films and tapes through early July. No entry fee. HIFF, East West Center, 1777 East-West Road, Honolulu, HI 96848. Tel: (808) 944-7666.

3) MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL AND VIDEOFEST (October 9-15)

This is another up and coming feature film festival that has become enamored with the pairing of animated shorts with its features. The ASIFA-San Francisco people have been helping the festival with the selection and promotion of the animated shorts. No entry fee, and deadline is June 30th. MVFFV, 80

Lomita Dr., Suite 20, Mill Valley, CA 94941; Tel: (415) 383-5256.

4) NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL (September 25-October 11)

The king of the American film festivals, selection of your animated short here brings elite press screenings, a black-tie party and the Lincoln Center show, itself. Entry mid-July, with no fee except return UPS charges. NYFF, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 140 W. 65th St., New York, N.Y. 10023. (212) 877-1800

5) TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL (September 4-7)

Though this event is much smaller than New York, in my opinion it's the best in the country. Held in a beautiful ski resort in a glacial valley surrounded by mountain peaks, this festival draws the American premieres of the finest films of the year, along with their directors and stars. EVERYONE waits on line to enter the theaters for each show, so you might well end up standing behind Jane Fonda or Roman Polanski and striking up a conversation about the film you had just seen. This is the ONLY festival in which directors of animated shorts are treated with as much honor and courtesy as the directors of features, and you'll love the audience feedback to your work. They accept 5-7 animated shorts each year. Entry deadline is August 1st, but the sooner they see your work, the better your chances of selection. There is now an entry fee, and you should call or write first: TFF, National Film Preserve, Box B1156, Hanover, N.H. 03755. Tel: (603) 643-1255.

6) ZAGREB '92 (June 22-26)

I have not yet received a listing of American film selected for the Festival, although Flip Johnson reports that "pulp" was accepted for Competition. By way of an update for you on Zagreb, I've decided to share with you a letter I received a few weeks ago from Zagreb 92's Director, Josko Marusic:

"I would like to inform you that our preparations for ZAGREB 92 are in full swing. Naturally, due to difficult circumstances in our country, the final outcome of our strife is still

EAST COAST

Flip Johnson has made only two independent shorts in the past twelve years, "THE ROAR FROM WITHIN" in 1982 and "pulp" in 1990. But "ROAR" won prizes at festivals around the world, including Zagreb, and "pulp" won awards at the Los Angeles Animation Celebration, Cinanima, and was presumably responsible for Flip's bringing down a coveted Guggenheim Grant this year. For the last twelve years, Flip has divided his time between running the animation department at the Boston Museum School and his independent work, and for the last five years, he's also been directing commercials and MTV spots. An ASIFA-East member for many years, Flip was gracious enough to do this interview.

David: Does teaching make you more free to do the films you want to do?

Flip: I'm beginning to think it doesn't. I've discovered that I do my best filmwork when I have extended periods of uninterrupted time. Teaching is a major emotional and mental distraction from my work.

David: How were you able to get your films done?

Flip: To make "pulp", I took two semesters of unpaid leave-of-absence, and also had a one semester sabbatical. I met my living expenses by using five years of savings. Although I can do some routine production work while I'm teaching, I haven't been able to get the creative things done.

David: What happens during the summers?

Flip: I'm very fussy about creative work. The summer is not enough time again for me to gear up and develop an idea, especially when it's followed by nine months of classes. When I can link a summer break to a semester off, four months' hiatus turns into eight and that is great.

David: Are you able to do shorter commercial jobs during your teaching?

Flip: I have been able to mix the commercial work with the teaching because production time is brief and usually doesn't require the same degree of creative input that my own films do. There's usually a school recess thrown in for extra time and the budgets include money for a support staff. I also end up working an extraordinary amount of time—often 100 hours every week. And I think the teaching probably suffers somewhat during those periods, so I am looking to unplug from the teaching.

David: Permanently?

Flip: Yeah. The commercial work might actually give me more flexibility because the interruptions from my own filmwork will be intense but brief.

David: Would you have an agent or spend time getting the work yourself?

Flip: Well, I don't know what I'll do in the future. So far I've been busy enough from word of mouth and other contacts. But it does take some time to keep those avenues open. In earlier articles, you suggested that

MTV I.D.s are like miniature art films. I don't entirely agree with that.

David: No one agreed with that.

Flip: (laughs) It's an interesting notion, and the I.D.s are a great opportunity to do interesting work. They can be very artistic, but they MUST be entertaining. The producers at MTV have the final say, and if you don't get approval, you're going to make some changes.

David: Was there anything in any of your pieces that they asked you to change?

Flip: They have been fairly hands-off with the stuff I've done. The point is that you aren't free to make whatever exists in your heart. From storyboard through post, you tailor your ideas to a certain audience. You don't have the luxury to even make the mistakes that can happen in an unencumbered pursuit of your own art.

David: In your own film, "pulp", did you consider your audience at all?

Flip: I'd be lying if I said I didn't, but I also believe I was totally true to what I wanted to do. And this was entirely my decision to make.

David: Can you define who was the audience in your mind?

Flip: Realistically or in my fantasy?

David: Both ways. What's the difference between the two?

Flip: In my fantasy, "pulp" would reach a large, broad audience. It would influence the way people think about art, and about man's role in the environment. In reality, we reach a limited, pre-existing audience of animation fans.

David: After you finish a film, specifically "pulp", do you make an attempt to enlarge the audience from, as you say, the pre-existing one?

Flip: I really don't know how to do that, David. I would if I thought I could. And it already takes time and money to run the festival circuit and make sure the established venues see your work. I don't know what else to do. Do you?

David: No

Flip: From your last interview it seems that Bill Plympton is trying very hard to find new audiences, but he also has a more mainstream product.

David: Yes, he's been fairly successful building his audiences. Flip, can you say something about how much "pulp" cost, and where the money came from?

Flip: The cash expenditures on "pulp" were approximately \$35,000. For my year off from teaching, I needed to cover approximately an additional \$30,000 with personal savings. I spent about four months on the Museum School's computer controlled Oxberry Master animation stand. This is a valuable teaching perk that saved me about \$40,000 in commercial rates. In summary, the budget for "pulp" was about \$105,000. Approximately \$25,000 came from grants—from the AFI, New England Regional Fellowship, and two faculty grants for travel and research. Camera time was donated and about

David
Par

INDEPENDENTS

by
David Ehrlich
and Flip Eight

\$40,000 came from personal savings.

David: Did you pay assistants to help you color and in-between?

Flip: I had some help with production and the camera, but not full-time. Also everything that looks like it's by hand is by my hand.

David: One thing I noticed about the film is its exquisite sound quality. What proportion of the expense was for the sound, and why did you choose in this film to make the sound as important as it was?

Flip: My films don't rely on characters or dialogue to tell the story. I use the musical structure and its emotional content to reinforce the film's themes. When music is used this way, I think I can reach people in a visceral way. The composer, Caleb Sampson, and I have a very nice long-term working relationship. I push him and he does really good work for me. We didn't have gobs of money to spend, but I think we spent well. The music was initially recorded in a 24-track music recording studio in a non-synch mix. The final Dolby Surround mix to pix was done in a really great New York facility, SOUND ONE. They also exposed the 35mm and 16mm opticals. The 16mm optical is blowing away my lab. It's better than they ever heard.

David: Will you do that in your next film? What will the Guggenheim cover?

Flip: The Guggenheim will not pay for a film. Their mission is to give recipients unencumbered time off to pursue their art and ideas. I'm taking next year off from teaching to work on my next film, but I still need to find more funding to produce it.

David: Do you hope to make money back from "pulp"?

Flip: Absolutely not! The more time I spend promoting it, the more it costs me. For example, it cost me \$60 to send it by Express Mail to Zagreb. This is the least expensive method available and by not spending \$140 for Fed Ex I risked its not getting there at all. I'm also paying for return shipping, publicity stills, postage, faxes, and tying up an expensive 35mm print for several months and risking its loss or damage. I will not see that money returned to me in any way.

David: Does it bother you to know that the film won't make the money back?

Flip: Yeah. It bothers me that artists who independently produce animated shorts get so little support. My priorities in life may have to change some day, and while I may be able to sacrifice time and money today, this will not be true indefinitely. I could also choose to work smaller, work in 16mm, and limit the audience I reach.

David: So for at least the next year, the film you are about to do is your priority?

Flip: Yes.

David: Can't wait to see it. Flip, since the changes at the NEA have gained national media coverage all this month,

how do you feel about it all?

Flip: I would like to caution everyone to be aware of the new Philistinism sweeping our country. It hides under the cloak of "building a consensus", but it is really about maintaining the status quo. This seemingly threatens animators peripherally, but in actuality, all artists and filmmakers are being assaulted.

By knuckling under to conservative pressure, the new director of the National Endowment for the Arts has vowed to impose content restrictions on all forms of art that come under its control. Anne-Imelda Radice makes the unbelievable claim that this presents an opportunity for the private sector to step in and support the arts. Of course this is fine for already popular art, but what about the controversial or not yet understood revolutionary works of art. No "private sector" entity will touch those with a ten foot pole.

The groups initiating these threats to intellectual and artistic freedom are predictably those who wield economic and political power in this society and feel most threatened by change—be it good or bad. These groups disingenuously prey on fear and hate by claiming that "family values are being threatened"—a euphemism for homophobia and for the questioning of Christianity and monotheism. Those issues are red herrings chosen to inflame popular sentiment against all artistic and intellectual activity—to silence minority viewpoints that threaten those in power.

The majority-held viewpoints will always have tremendous unlimited access to all forms of media and are not being threatened. People whose ideas of change are underrepresented such as minority artists, gay and female artists, and people who speak out against the evils of organized religion or our political system, need the support of our government through the NEA. It is only with this support that a healthy intellectual debate can take place so our society can change and evolve.

The irony of this is that aside from military weaponry, art and entertainment is the largest U.S. export. So to protect itself from voices of dissension and change, our government is dismantling the engine that drives the basic research that creates a world-class art.

This is simply not someone else's problem. It is our problem as artists and as people.

David: Thanks Flip. I have a feeling our readers will want to respond to your diatribe, especially as the entire controversy builds to a climax in the coming weeks. If we receive enough letters, both for and against, we may print a special follow-up Newsletter over the summer.

Send replies to David Ehrlich, RR 1, Box 50, Randolph, Vermont 05060.

NEW YORK UPDATE

By TOM WARBURTON

Before I get skewered anymore by you New York Update readers, let me explain myself. Last month I was all set to get my article going when a super incredulous rush job hit the drawing desks of J.J.

Sedelmaier Productions. I found myself lost in a flurry of animation paper and cel-o-tac and unable to get the April edition out for you guys and gals to read. This may sound like an out and out lame excuse, but I won't lie to you: it is. I just want to apologize for any inconvenience I might have caused any of you out there in the animation industry and I hope you can forgive me at some point in the future. But fear not! I am back this month with an all new Update of the New York scene that will leave you begging for more!

Two months ago I promised you an article dealing with the topic of practical jokes and while it would have been more appropriate around April Fools Day, you'll just have to settle for it around Memorial Day. So sit down on the sofa, gather up your loved ones and check this out. As most of you know, people in this business have a tendency to be a bit mischievous. As I called people to gouge them for stories of juvenile frivolity occurring in the New York studios, most people asked not to be mentioned by name so as to protect their image as mature businessmen and women. While you're all chuckling at the very idea of there being a few mature people in animation, I'll start off with a classic gag that just about everyone mentioned to me. The animation punch that we all use to register our animation paper gives you a lot of confetti, doesn't it? Well, at just about every studio there's been some wise guy who waits for a rainy day and puts that confetti in someones closed umbrella. When the owner of that umbrella steps outside and opens it up, they get a rather annoying shower of little white paper all over them. I will admit to being that wise guy on a number of

occasions. In the same vein, there was a time that if you happened to pull a string hanging from a ceiling lamp at R/Greenberg, you would get that same cel punch shower courtesy of local pranksters. If you're a big fan of the classics, you'll love this one. Back when cels were inked by hand, you could tap a little salt or sugar into your neighbors ink bottle. When the tainted ink is used it looks fine.....but once dry the formerly smooth line turns into a rather unacceptable fuzzy line that will make any inker rather irate. If you think that's bad, I haven't even got started yet.

Did I mention the age old trick of taking a nice dab of Limberger cheese and smearing it on the lightbulb under an animation disc? The heat of the lamp just cooks it up real nice and releases a rather putrid smell that the owner of the desk can't locate. Then there's the one where you stretch a rubber band across the underside of your victim's desk. Carefully place a cup full of water in it and when he rolls his chair up to the desk that cup of water just spills right into his crotch. Yes, it's cruel, but I don't make 'em up, I just report 'em.

But while we're on the subject of cruel, someone mentioned to me the ultimate in juvenile tricks: strategically placing a cel on the women's toilet. Guaranteed to make you unpopular with the female population in your studio if you get caught. And by the way, who was it that made plaster casts of bloody, severed fingers and put them next to the paper cutter at Broadcast Arts? Now before all you rookie pranksters get inspired and do something crazy tomorrow at work, let me tell you a tale of a prank gone bad. Back when the Terrytoons studio was still around, one of the employees had bought a new car and new cars were prime targets for practical jokes.

One jokester hooked up a whistle bomb to the spark plugs of this car and when the

owner started it up, she got quite a shock when a loud whistle pierced the air followed by a big BANG! She got a worse shock when she found out that the bomb blew out the motor in her brand new car. Fortunately, the studio got together a collection of money to repair the damage and all was right with the world again.

Hey origami fans! You might be interested to hear that back in the days when Famous Studios was still around, many a bored animator used to fold paper into little sets of cowboy spurs. What did they do with them? Sneak up on someone and tape the spurs onto someones shoes, of course. Imagine the fun of following the victim out of the studio and watching the reaction of passerbys to the little buckaroo. Don't stop reading yet, because this next

one will shock and amaze you. Someone related to me the story of some poor victim who was innocently chatting on one of the phones in a local studio. As he gabbed away, something stuck on the receiver brushed his lip. I figure he was not to happy when he found out that someone had spray mounted a fly onto it. YEACHHIIII

On that absolutely gross note, I think I'll wrap this things up. I hope yo'll have enjoyed this bit of animation history because I know I have. Just please don't go off trying any of these things and then blaming me when you get caught. Blame someone else in your studio. And by the way, who put this whoopee cushion on my chair?

Michael Sporn Animation, Inc. recently completed production of its second half-hour film for 1992 with "The Nightingale" an original adaptation by Maxine Fisher of the tale by Hans Christian Andersen. The film features a totally Japanese cast headed by Mako; backgrounds and art direction are by Masako Kanayama; animation direction was headed by Rodolfo Damaggio. "The Nightingale" is scheduled to air in October on the PBS series, "Long Ago and Far Away".

Currently in production is "The Poky Little Puppy Christmas Special." This half-hour special is based on the characters from the 1942 Little Golden Book. The original book was illustrated by Gustaf Tenggren, the art director of Disney's "Pinocchio". Elizabeth Seidman and Rodolfo Damaggio team for the Sporn version. This film will be released through Western Publishing and syndicated worldwide this Christmas.

Rounding out the summer's production will be "The Talking Eggs", a half-hour program for "Long Ago and Far Away". The screenplay by Maxine Fisher freely adapts the Creole folktale.

Get Well Howard!

ASIFA-East would like to wish Howard Beckerman a speedy and successful recovery from his recent surgery.

Mr. Beckerman is a true "untouchable" and we have every confidence he shall return to his lanky self.

To send cards and flowers please forward to:

Iris Beckerman
35-38 169 Street
Flushing, NY 11358



FILMFESTIVALS - continued

uncertain. We are receiving letters of support from all over the world, but from time to time we hear from people who wonder whether it makes sense to organize a festival in a country devastated by war, in a country still at war. Here are the answers to their questions:

"We decided that ZAGREB 92 should take place not because we are turning a blind eye to everything happening in our country, but precisely because we see it all too well. War does not change into peace like night to day. Our fight for civilized and human life will not be won by our nice wishes. This war happened because we did not manage to span the gap between beauty and hatred, a dream of bright future and fear of the dark.

"Our festival, just like our animated film, grew like a flower watered by our wishes and desires for a better life. Now is the time of awakening and facing up to the facts, now is the time of growing up and maturing. This is our harsh reality. Children's dreams and naivety are far behind us. We have to face the truth like grown up men and women.

"Dear friend, we feel that our relation to

ZAGREB 92 is the measure of our success in everything that led us while we spent time together, worked together, and judged animated films together for these twenty years. I dare say that if our Festival fails, ASIFA will suffer. The success of our Festival is the success of ASIFA, realization of all our efforts, realization of dreams of hundreds of artists who offer understanding hands through art "frame by frame". If our Festival fails the animation movement will fall apart into numberless individual attempts, and ASIFA will become a formal organization void of purpose and soul.

"Therefore, please help us! Write, call us, give us support, help us to organize this important event. We can organize the Festival by ourselves, but we believe that both we and you need this Festival. Millions of people, our friends are still waiting in the darkness of cultural prehistory, they will need our helping hand as well. We are just about to come out of the darkness, help us, help yourself too. We are about to organize Croatian ASIFA. We will keep you informed of our actions. I hope we shall meet in Zagreb in June."

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'mess it up' a lot."

Nallaseth used Iris software to add texture maps of dirt and crease marks to give the cards a soiled, used look. Mulroney and de Seve also animated elements by hand, scanning drawings into the computer. The trees and blowing dust (ink spattered from a toothbrush) originated on paper. Final compositing was done in Macintosh Adobe Photo Shoppe for transfer to 35mm film.

De Seve and Nallaseth both come from a background of traditional cel animation. In 1991, Nallaseth completed her M.A. in Computer Art at School of Visual Arts.

"Cel animators have this intimidation with computers," she says. "I used to be afraid of

them. It was helpful learning the architecture of the computer; you can't just bang on the keyboard and say, "Why? Why isn't it working?" It gives you patience.

"They're just machines. You can't be afraid of them. It's like being afraid of the television."

MTV invited animators around the world to submit storyboards which, in 30 seconds or less, identify a world problem and suggest how to solve it. Of the 600 entries, MTV chose 10 for broadcast. These ten films premiered in March at the Cardiff Animation Festival. "Feet" was awarded first prize, "House of Cards" second.

Finally, the End of the Year. Actually, it is not officially the end of the year for anyone except for students, and, of course, ASIFA board members who must spend the summer having deep thoughts and preparing debate material for those raucous board meetings which will resume in September.

It is also the end of my first year as president, which gives me the chance to reflect on the past year.

The highlight of the year for me was seeing the newsletter return to its place as the center of debate and commentary in the New York animation community. I would like to thank editor John R. Dilworth and all the writers for the ongoing discussions and informative articles.

I was also pleased with the interesting selection of programs we presented. As ever, we would appreciate your thoughts and opinions for future screenings. We are hoping to show more work on film than on video, and are expecting to move our screenings back to NYU. Those of you with an interest in international animation should let me know if there are any international animators you are interested in seeing. This year David Ehrlich and Marty McNamara, members of the international board, brought both Leif Marcussen and Michel Ocelot to present their animation.

This year, the membership of ASIFA has increased significantly. I'm hoping that new members as well as old members will share with the board their needs and interests. A number of members let me know their thoughts on the ASIFA-EAST festival, and through this, we were able to make some changes in the format for the festival. Next year, the festival will probably start earlier and will be followed by a party, so there will be no rushing and more films.

Those of you who have wondered how one can be more active in ASIFA are welcome to join the board of directors. Give us one night of your time each month for a board meeting, and in exchange you will get healthy debate, gossip, and the chance to put stamps and labels on newsletters.

As ever, feel free to call me or write if you have questions or comments. And have a nice summer. ASIFA action resumes in September.

The Environmental Animation Network and Database

Animation has the unique advantage over other film genres in being able to cut across age, language and cultural barriers to educate and inform. It is an ideal medium through which to impart crucial health and environment information to students and the general public. The Environmental Animation Network and Database is a non-profit project which aims to promote health and environment animation from all over the world.

Based in Boston, MA, the project would act primarily as an information base on animated health and environment films, serving animators, distributors, broadcasters and educationalists and funders. By acting as a link between all these parties, the Environmental Animation Network and Database hopes to stimulate the creation and widespread use of health and environment animation.

The project is currently seeking funding, but we are now looking for health and environment animation to review and enter into the database. Animators are invited to send in VHS copies of films (in NTSC, PAL, or SECAM formats) for inclusion in the database, and possible review in a UK-based environmental film magazine. We interpret 'health and environment' in the broadest sense. All films will be promptly returned! Please send films and requests for general information to: Elizabeth Frankl, Apt. 2, 40 Imrie Road, Allston, MA 02134. Tel and FAX: 617 782-7425.

(I have received very positive reports about the integrity and effectiveness of Ms Frankl's previous work in England and can fully recommend this project.²David Ehrlich)